unless, indeed, it be one somewhat ill-defended outpost connected with metre. The poet's ear might have been a little nicer. Had it been so, he would have spared his readers an occasional jar and a panegyric on Lord Byron's poetry. There are, we know, those who regard this outpost we have so lightly abandoned as the citadel. These rhyming gentry scout what Arnold called the terrible sentence passed on a French poet—*il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire.* They see nothing terrible in a sentence which does but condemn them to nakedness. Thought is cumbersome. You skip best with nothing on. But the sober-minded English people are not the countrymen of Milton and Cowper, of Crabbe and Wordsworth, for nothing. They like poetry to be serious. We are fond of sermons. We may quarrel with the vicar's five-and-twenty minutes, but we let Carlyle go on for twice as many years, and until he had filled thirty-four octavo volumes.

The fact is that though Arnold was fond of girding at the Hebrew in us, and used to quote his own Christian name with humorous resignation as only an instance of the sort of thing he had to put up with, he was a Puritan at heart, and would have been as ill at ease at a Greek festival as Newman at a Spanish *auto da fé*.

What gives Arnold's verse its especial charm is his grave and manly sincerity. He is a poet without artifice or sham. He does not pretend to find all sorts of meanings in all sorts of things. He does not manipulate the universe and present his readers with any bottled elixir. This has been cast up against him as a reproach. His poetry, so we have been told, has no consolation in it. Here is a doctor, it is said, who makes up no drugs, a poet who does not proclaim that he sees God in the avalanche or hears Him in the thunder. The world will not, so we are assured, hang upon the lips of one who bids them not to be too sure that the winds are wailing man's secret to the complaining sea, or that nature is nothing but a theme for poets. These people may be right. In any event it is unwise to prophesy. What will be will be. Nobody can wish to be proved wrong. It is best to be on the side of truth, whatever the truth may be. The real atheism is to say, as men are found to do, that they would sooner be convicted of error they think pleasing, than have recognised an unwelcome truth a moment earlier than its final demonstration, if indeed such a moment should ever arrive for souls so craven. In the meantime, this much is plain, that there is no consolation in non-coincidence with fact, and no sweetness which does not chime with experience. Therefore, those who have derived consolation from Mr. Arnold's noble verse may take comfort. Religion, after all, observes Bishop Butler in his tremendous way, is nothing if it is not true. The same may be said of the poetry of consolation.

The pleasure it is lawful to take in the truthfulness of Mr. Arnold's poetry should not be allowed to lead his lovers into the pleasant paths of exaggeration. The Muses dealt him out their gifts with a somewhat niggardly hand. He had to cultivate his Sparta. No one of his admirers can assert that in Arnold

> "The force of energy is found,
> And the sense rises on the wings of sound."

He is no builder of the lofty rhyme. This he was well aware of. But neither had he any ample measure of those "winged fancies" which wander at will through the pages of Apollo's favourite children. His strange indifference to Shelley, his severity towards Keats, his lively sense of the wantonness of Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, incline us to the belief that he was not quite sensible of the advantages of a fruitful as compared with a barren soil. His own crop took a good deal of raising, and he was perhaps somewhat disposed to regard luxuriant growths with disfavour.

But though severe and restricted, and without either grandeur or fancy, Arnold's poetry is most companionable. It never bores you—there he has the better of Shelley—or surfeits you—there he prevails over Keats. As a poet, we would never dare or wish to class him with either Shelley or Keats, but as a companion to slip in your pocket before starting to spend the day amid

> "The cheerful silence of the fells,"

you may search far before you find anything better than either of the two volumes of Mr. Arnold's poems.

His own enjoyment of the open air is made plain in his poetry. It is no borrowed rapture, no mere bookish man's clumsy joy in escaping from his library, but an enjoyment as hearty and honest as Izaak Walton's. He has a quick eye for things, and rests upon them with a quiet satisfaction. No need to give instances; they will occur to all. Sights and sounds alike pleased him well. So obviously genuine, so real, though so quiet, was his pleasure in our English lanes and dells, that it is still difficult to realise that his feet can no longer stir the cowslips or his ear hear the cuckoo's parting cry.

Amidst the melancholy of his verse, we detect deep human enjoyment and an honest human endeavour to do the best he could whilst here below. The best he could do was in our opinion his verse, and it is a comfort amidst the wreckage of life to believe he made the most of his gift, cultivating it wisely and well, and enriching man's life with some sober, serious, and beautiful poetry. We are indeed glad to notice that there is to be a new edition of Mr. Arnold's poems in one volume. It will, we are afraid, be too stout for the pocket, but most of its contents will be well worth lodgment in the head. This new edition will, we have no doubt whatever, immensely increase the number of men and women who own the charm of Arnold. The times are ripening for his poetry, which is full of foretastes of the morrow. As we read we are not carried back by the reflection "so men once thought," but rather forward along the paths, dim and perilous it may be, but still the paths mankind is destined to tread. Truthful, sober, severe, with a capacity for deep, if placid enjoyment of the pageant of the world and a quick eye for its varied sights and an eager ear for its delightful sounds, Matthew Arnold is a poet whose limitations we may admit without denying his right. Our passion for him is a loyal passion for a most temperate king. There is an effort on his brow, we must admit it. It would never do to mistake his poetry for what he called the best, and which he was ever urging upon a sluggish populace. It intellectualises far too much, its method is a known method, not a magical one. But though effort may be on his brow, it is a noble effort and has had a noble result.

> "For most men in a brazen prison live,
> Where in the sun's hot eye,
> With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
> Their lives to some unmeaning task-work give,
> Dreaming of nought beyond their prison wall.
> And as, year after year,
> Fresh products of their barren labour fall
> From their tired hands, and rest
> Never yet comes more near,
> Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;
> And while they try to stem
> The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest,
> Death in their prison reaches them
> Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest."

Or if not a slave he is a madman, sailing where he will on the wild ocean of life.

> "And then the tempest strikes him, and between
> The lightning bursts is seen
> Only a driving wreck
> And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck,
> With anguished face and flying hair,
> Grasping the rudder hard,
> Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
> Still standing for some false impossible shore;
> And sterner comes the roar
> Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
> Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
> And he too disappears and comes no more."

To be neither a rebel nor a slave is the burden of much of Mr. Arnold's verse—his song we cannot call

it. We cannot but believe it will be a long time before men cease to read their Arnold; even the Rebel and the Slave will occasionally find a moment for so doing, and when they do so it may be written of them:—

> "And then arrives a lull in the hot race
> Wherein he doth for ever chase
> That flying and elusive shadow Rest.
> An air of coolness plays upon his face,
> And an unwonted calm pervades his breast,
> And then he thinks he knows
> The hills where his life rose
> And the sea where it goes."

THE CLIMAX OF GOLF.

THE triumph in the end of last week of an amateur, who happens also to be an Englishman, in the competition for the golf championship of the world, marks an important stage in the history of a game which, during the past few years, has made unprecedented strides in popular favour on this, even more than on the Scotch, side of the Tweed. For what has been done by Mr. John Ball, of Hoylake—who represents the third generation of a golfing family, as, till recently, he was known as Mr. John Ball *tertius*, and is still Mr. John Ball, junior—may, in theory at least, be done by every Civil servant, bank clerk, or man of letters, who, having purchased a large assortment of clubs, proceeds to-day with high hopes and a superabundance of ferocity, to destroy the turf at Westward Ho! or St. Andrews. In most athletic games, and specially cricket, the equality of the amateur with the professional player has been for many years freely recognised, because it has been amply demonstrated. But until within a few weeks ago it was believed impossible for an amateur golfer to compete on equal terms with a professional, who begins his career the moment he is old enough to swing a club round his shoulder. The lowest on "record" scores on all "greens" have been made by men who, like Tom Morris, the venerable and highly respected high-priest of golf in its chief temple at St. Andrews, have lived in, on, and for the game all their lives. The supremacy of such players has now, however, been successfully challenged. Mr. Ball, who in the beginning of the year carried off the exclusive amateur championship for the second time, last Thursday met and defeated on a Scotch green the chief professional golfing talent in the country, including several ex-champions and a redoubtable St. Andrews player, who, although he has never won the blue riband of the game, lately inflicted a severe defeat on the champion of 1889. The chances are very decided that Mr. Ball's achievement will be repeated in the future. For perfection in golf, as in all other games, is attained only by constant practice; and there is a section of "gentlemen" players, including Mr. Ball himself, Mr. Laidlay, and Mr. Horace Hutchinson, who, like himself, have held the amateur championship, that have begun to play as early in life as any professional, and play a great deal more. For the professional must make a livelihood; and this he can do only in the one or the other of two ways—in carrying clubs for and giving instruction to gentlemen as a "caddie," or in working in a club-maker's shop as a journeyman. In either case he is or ought to be busy all day, and can only practise the game of an evening. The "gentleman" who is also an enthusiast is, as a rule, a man of means, and there is nothing to prevent his playing all day long. It is more than probable that Mr. Ball, during the twelvemonth which preceded the struggle in which he came off victorious, had practised twice as much as any of the professional players whom he vanquished.

The true glory of golf, however, is not experienced by the amateur who devotes his life to attaining perfection in it, who is miserable unless he accomplishes the statutory round of eighteen holes in less than eighty strokes, and who would be driven to the verge of suicide were he once, in the course of that round, to "foozle a drive"—*i.e.*, hit a ball so clumsily that the weight of his stroke is practically wasted. Most pleasure and benefit from the game fall to the man who has to devote nine-tenths of his time to business, and who can only give up two hours a day, or a complete day a week, to golf. As a rule, he begins to play when he has reached, or is on the verge of, middle age, and when he has been peremptorily ordered by his doctor to "take exercise." Seldom, if ever, does he acquire that "full swing" of the club round the shoulder which is to outsiders the most attractive portion of the game. But there is no reason why, with care, patience, and practice—more especially if he has the good sense to take a few preliminary lessons from a professional player or veteran "caddie"—he should not in three years or so play passably. Even if he never plays otherwise than indifferently, he will be the better for one round of his green per day—which means between two hours and two hours and a half of walking—or three rounds of a Saturday. Let him secure as companion and opponent a kindred spirit, who, in point of play, is at the same stage of imperfection as himself. A match or "single" between them will not be marked by such skilful play as one between two "crack" professionals or amateurs, and will probably mean twenty or thirty strokes more before the round of eighteen holes is completed. But a game on which a championship, a medal, or a sum of money depends, is played in silence and with high Arnoldian seriousness; the crowd which accompanies it, especially at St. Andrews, has all the solemnity of a funeral procession. For fourth-rate players, who are content to be nothing better than fourth-rate players, there are left all the humours and delights of the round—the petty tribulation caused by getting into and failing to get out of "bunkers," and the equally petty ecstasy occasioned by a chance drive of astonishing length. Golf is, above all things, a game—not of strength, but of skill; a display of mere brute force ends, as a rule, not in success, but in disaster. Yet it demands a complete, if temporary, concentration of the brain; it obliterates self-consciousness. In this obliteration consists its supreme value for the man of sedentary habits, its superiority to walking and all other mild forms of exercise. The relief it affords from business is complete; and yet the bodily fatigue it entails is so slight that a round of golf, instead of incapacitating a man for work, rather enables him to return to it with greater zest. Besides, golf can be played under such conditions as to reduce fatigue to a minimum. The most enjoyable form of the game—at least, for those who engage in it simply for enjoyment—is a "foursome," in which two play against two, and share the responsibility of driving one ball from tee to hole.

The climax in golf has come; indeed, the rush to it at the present moment is far too great and eager to last. It is not simply men who work chiefly with their brains—judges, clergymen, artists, journalists, members of Parliament, and novelists—that have taken to it almost *en masse*, and are never weary of singing its praises (sometimes, it must be admitted, in very indifferent verse) as the sole perfect cure for dyspepsia, the megrims, and worry. Young athletes are abandoning cricket and football for golf, and are competing with each other as to who can "drive the longest ball." It is probable, however, that the attachment of such to golf will be but short-lived. The driving of a long ball from a tee is by no means the whole, or even the most important part, of the play. Holes are, in nine cases out of ten, won or lost by what is commonly styled the "shut game," by "approaches" to the hole with an iron club, and by "putting" on the level green which surrounds the hole. This "shut game" requires absolutely no strength, but only deftness—of the kind, however, which is quite as likely to be exhibited by a Nestor of sixty as by an Achilles of

twenty-one. In all probability, therefore, golf will be abandoned by young athletes as being emphatically —what, indeed, it is—a game for middle-aged men. Yet the present craze may, if it last sufficiently long, serve two useful purposes. It may evolve order out of the chaos of golf etiquette. Certain general regulations, originating in St. Andrews, are observed on all courses; but the bye-laws of one green are sometimes different from the bye-laws of another. This often leads to confusion and unpleasant disputes. It may be hoped, therefore, that the present enthusiasm for golf will lead to a complete codification of its laws. Another matter calls for urgent attention. The irregular army of "caddies," or professional club-carriers for amateurs, needs discipline. Many of them know nothing whatever of the game; others are boys who ought to be at school instead of learning to loaf and tipple in the vicinity of a golf-course. The "caddies" on every green ought to be registered, and the boys to be dismissed. So many energetic men of business are now taking to the game that it may be hoped they will introduce into it so much of the element in which they live and move as is involved in these two small reforms.

A RAMBLER IN LONDON.

XX.—In Kensington Gardens.

On a September afternoon, when the autumn is trying to make up for the summer, it is pleasant to enjoy a penny solitude on a chair in Kensington Gardens. It is pleasant, because in the remoter parts of these gardens London is very far off, and drowsy noises invite one to slumber. One hears the quack of the ducks on the pond in the distance, the barking of dogs well pleased with the open space, the laughter of children—children of beautiful attire from respectable Bayswater or cultured Kensington—the rustle of dead leaves as someone passes across the grass, and the hum of the traffic far away in the Uxbridge Road. As one listens to these faint sounds, things slowly become indistinct and uncertain. The hum of the traffic is changed into the hum of a mowing-machine in a garden which you knew well once, a hundred miles away from London. You remember that the sound of that mowing-machine always used to send you to sleep. Why, you ask, does it not send one to sleep now? Possibly, because these dogs make such a noise with their quacking—there is something wrong with that reason, but you do not feel strenuous enough to put it right. Oblivion comes slowly over you; your last conscious thoughts are that it is unseemly to sleep in a public place, and that you will keep awake, and then that you simply must go to sleep for two minutes and trust that the curate and the rest of the congregation will not observe it. The curate and congregation have been brought into your mind by some association of ideas which I am unable to trace. So you sleep calmly, until someone touches you on the shoulder; in an instant you are sitting upright and assuming an expression of reverent attention. It is only the man who has charge of the chairs, and who apologises for disturbing you. The consciousness of things-as-they-really-are comes over you in quick surges, and for one penny you purchase the right to sit on any chair in Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, the Green Park, and St. James's Park during the remainder of the day.

The desire to walk always follows immediately upon the purchase of the right to sit down, just as the knowledge that one can now sleep undisturbed always induces wakefulness. You walk down the avenue; a nursemaid is running with a perambulator to the delight of the baby inside. At the speed which she has attained the perambulator is only partially under control, and occasionally zig-zags. As you pass, it zig-zags into you and hurts you. The nursemaid gives you one look, and you feel at once that in some way, which you cannot understand now, she has conferred a favour upon you, and that you have not behaved at all well about it. You murmur an apology, and she moves away at a reduced speed, talking audibly to the baby: "Did the nasty, great, ugly man try to upset byeby's pretty p'rambulator, then?" There are many nursemaids in Kensington Gardens, and a proper perambulator track ought to be laid down. Under the trees on one side of the avenue two school-girls are sitting and reading, or, to be more accurate, one of them is reading out loud, and the other is embroidering a sock, or some work of that kind, and listening. The reader pauses as you pass; not from natural modesty and reserve, but in order to make you feel more like a blight. A little further on a woman of severe aspect sits with a book in her hands. Occasionally she closes her eyes and her lips move. She is committing something to memory. The book is a reciter; so there is a bad time coming for some respectable drawing-room. A very old lady is wheeled past in her chair; as she passes you, she raises a deliberate double eye-glass, discovers all your little deficiencies, and finds them quite uninteresting. Why go further? Why should you go on to the pond—you, who have no bread to give the ducks, and do not understand the scientific sailing of boats? Have you not still in your ticket-pocket that by virtue of which you may sit on any chair in Kensington Gardens and three Parks? Go back to your penny solitude!

Once more you sit beneath the shadow of some great tree, and hear "the girdling city's hum." Look upward, and on every bough each leaf is edged with brown, and yellow blotches stain the green, veined centres. It is warm enough now; but in a little while the trees will be bared, and you will scarcely care to sit still for long in the open. It is quiet enough here; here no loud orator exhorts his crowd to hate the capitalist or lead a better life; the noise of the traffic is rather a lullaby than a distraction; but one has not far to walk before one reaches the uproar. The warm, drowsy, autumn afternoon in these Gardens has all the charm of a snatched opportunity; the quiet is more deeply felt because the noisy restlessness is so near. In the desert one is proverbially thankful for the oasis; in the oasis one should be thankful for the desert. In Kensington Gardens—perhaps "in this lone, open glade"—one of our modern poets wrote not the least charming of his lyrics, as he watched:—

> "All things in this glade go through
> The changes of their quiet day."

You wander away towards the gate, trying to recall the rest of the poem. Fate is fond of spoiling our most cultured and appreciative moments. The London boy, who has passed out of the gate before you, turns back excitedly, and shouts to his brother, who is some twenty yards behind him—

"Awthur! Loossharp! Run! 'Ere's a cabbos down."

AN INVITATION TO DINNER.

About a fortnight ago, a letter reached this office, addressed (in very bad taste, we thought) "To a Person of No Consequence." On looking at the inscription every member of the staff said hastily that the epistle was evidently not meant for him; and by this time it would doubtless have been destroyed unopened had not we bethought ourselves that a gentleman, signing "A Person of No Consequence," once exposed himself in these pages. The letter was immediately forwarded to him, and almost as promptly returned, with "Why not print this?" scrawled across the first page. So we print it.

Though I am unable (the letter begins) to obtain an introduction to you in the usual manner, I feel (and am in hopes you will feel) that you ought to know me. I already seem to know you better than

I know my own son, who, though only twelve, is separated from me by his many superior accomplishments. It is now some time since you contributed two articles to THE SPEAKER, that made me long to clasp your hand, but my wife, who despises me (and you too), would not let me write. She is now at the sea-side, and so I take the opportunity of asking you, will you excuse want of formality, and dine with me at the ——— Club on Wednesday at 7.30? We shall be quite alone.

Certainly not, is the reply that rises to your lips. But please first listen to my excuse for troubling you. In THE SPEAKER you painted your portrait; let me enclose you mine, after which I leave it to you to decide whether we are to know each other in the flesh. It seems to me that we are sufficiently alike for sympathy, and yet not so much alike that we would quarrel for want of something to disagree about.

For many years, you say, you have kept silence while pictures were extolled which you privately thought hideous, and books were raved about which you could not read, and men, furniture, saucers, and the like were fashionable according as, in your secret opinion, they were shams. I heartily sympathise with you.

But my secret is somewhat different from yours. For at least a score of years I have known that the whole world is well-informed—except myself. I have kept this secret jealously locked away from everyone (save my wife, who found it out long ago), and it weighs so heavily on me that I would like to share it with you—the only honest man who ever put pen to paper. I would not feel the shame of being ill-informed so much were it not that I am a well-to-do person who has been quite a success in life. I have a comfortable income, a son who seems already to know what the differential calculus is, two blooming daughters, and a balance at my banker's. I am highly respected, and when I preside at meetings the reporters give my introductory speech in full. Yet, my dear sir, I am—I must be—a living lie. Only the other day I found one of my housemaids reading botany, and I was ashamed. What right have I to be respected by that girl? A month ago I advertised for a clerk who could read modern Greek. The salary offered was ninety pounds, and I had thirty applications. Surely I showed great hardihood in facing these thirty well-informed young men. I have forgotten the Greek alphabet—and yet here I am, well-to-do and universally respected. It seems absurd. Ought I not in common justice to exchange places with one of my clerks? (obviously it could not be the Greek one). Yet, on the other hand, I seem able to manage my business with success. I hope you are becoming interested.

The newspapers annoy me so much that I sometimes think of ceasing to take one in. It is said that there are trade journals for every class in England, however small; but, sir, there is not one for me. Here is this Argentine Republic affair; the papers have been full of it; and I observe the flippant ones are now saying that the subject has been overdone. But not one of the articles has told what I want to know about the Argentine Republic. I want to know where it is. Do you know? I hope not.

What is your candid opinion of science? I can make neither head nor tail of it. Yet they teach science at our schools nowadays to boys of ten. It is years since that boy of mine, obviously egged on by his teachers, took to asking me "Why does the kettle boil?" "What are the component parts of gas?" "Can you explain why holly leaves are prickly?" I have thrashed him several times for his impertinent curiosity, but the real reason why he has ceased to ask questions is that he now knows almost everything. Last summer I was at Innsbruck, and on my return I foolishly said that I had seen the town lit by electricity for the first time. "Water power, I suppose?" he asked. "Certainly," I said, with great presence of mind; but I could have smacked his face. It is these details that make my life one constant anxiety.

You will see that I am not the kind of person who exults in his infirmities. I try hard to become well-informed, but the chances are that, if a book is the medium, I fall asleep just when knowledge is coming to me. And sometimes I am brutally undeceived. For instance, I lately found in a magazine a scientific article by Mr. Grant Allen. I was so determined (for my boy had been explaining the properties of hydrogen to one of his sisters, who seemed to follow him) to master its contents that I read it (with thoughtful pauses) three times, and then I turned to a newspaper where the magazine was reviewed. Consider my annoyance when I read, "And there is also one of those mild science-and-water articles of Mr. Grant Allen's which ought really to be headed 'Food for Babes.'" My dear sir, I had read that article three times, *and it was too steep for me.*

I think I mentioned a minute ago that I was at Innsbruck last year. I often go to the Continent, and though the only foreign word I know is "How much?" I would enjoy myself were it not that the other travellers are all so well-informed. Do you understand how they get that train to go up Pilatus? It is as much a mystery to me as the telephone. Then the fellow sitting next you at dinner insists on telling you, as a good joke, something that the waiter said in German. You are forced to laugh idiotically, but in reality you are far from feeling amused. Worse almost than the casual acquaintances are the officers at the Custom House, who, instead of examining and chalking one's baggage quietly, pounce upon your stick of shaving-soap and point at it and jabber to you as if you were a criminal because you shaved.

I hope you don't know what literary style is. I never met a man who could not (and did not) tell me all about it, and where it differed from matter, and how the two things were really the same, though they should not be confused.

Now, will you accept my informal invitation to the club? (I would ask you to my house, but my wife might hear of it—and she is really very particular). Surely we could spend a pleasant evening together. If you are a philistine beyond all others, and I am the worst-informed man in the kingdom, we ought certainly to meet. If there are other persons like us (as I sometimes think), we can talk them over, and wonder whether they are in the circle of our own acquaintances. I daresay they would be delighted to join us and unbosom themselves. In any case, it would be a real pleasure to me to meet you, for your boldness in publishing your secret, though I cannot emulate it, fills me with admiration. I don't know what business you follow, but neither of us, it is evident (we are too plain-spoken), is a writing chap, so the meeting would be safe for both. What are you like in appearance? I am fifty years old, and perhaps rather insignificant-looking (how could it be otherwise?). I picture you as short and stout, with a rubicund face, half hidden in hair, but, of course, I may be mistaken. I wish you would come—7.30 on Wednesday. Don't dress.

THE WEEK.

THE American publishers are really beginning at last to "see themselves as others see them"—a result for which we venture to think we may take some credit to ourselves. The latest proof of their desire to dissever themselves from the discredit of piratical practices has been the introduction, at the beginning of "authorised" editions of English works, of lithographed *fac-simile* letters from the authors, stating that the publishers are legally entitled to produce the books. MR. JAMES PAYN'S delightfully quaint and puzzling handwriting has thus appeared within the last few weeks at the beginning of two volumes

published in the United States, one being his new novel "The Will and the Way," and the other his "Notes from the *News*."

MR. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON has abandoned his project of visiting England during the present year, and has determined that for the present, at all events, he will not return to Europe. He has fixed his home at Apia, Samoa, and is engaged upon the important work describing his wanderings in the Pacific, of which mention has already been made. Would we could hear that he was devoting a portion of his spare time to another story like "The Master of Ballantrae," or to that sequel to "Kidnapped" which we have so long been awaiting! As it is, we may confidently expect that the author of "An Inland Voyage" will have lost none of his charm when dealing with a theme so full of interest and romance as the islands of the Pacific.

"BLEAK HOUSE" went through a railway collision; JOHN STUART MILL'S housemaid lit JOHN STUART MILL'S fire with the first volume of CARLYLE'S "French Revolution;" a terrier ate NEWTON'S "Principia"; MISS MARIE CORELLI left a manuscript in a cab; and quite a large number of authors have been stripped by pirates. These accidents attend the great, and MR. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON has come near to furnishing another example. He tells in a letter how he was cruising between Samoa and Auckland in search of health (for he has been ill again at Sydney), when his cabin caught fire. In the excitement his crew began to heave the burning furniture on deck, and toss it overboard. MRS. STEVENSON was just in time to save the box that contained her husband's MSS. from following the rest. It was dropped on deck, drenched with water, and saved. It held the work of many months, including the notes he has been compiling on the history of the island where he is about to settle.

FOR the traveller who observes the bookstalls as he goes, there is comfort in marking the popularity of the cheap edition of MR. HARDY'S novels now being issued by MESSRS. SAMPSON LOW & CO. It is proof positive, too, that the six-shilling volumes, so abominable in print and binding, were the result of a short-sighted error; and it does much to account for the public's tardiness in giving MR. HARDY his due admiration, at which so many of us have marvelled. The average Briton refuses to buy "A Laodicean" in its present form; and in so far as he turns publishers to better counsels he does well. It is true that the new volumes resemble the old "yellow-back" in almost everything but colour. Nevertheless they are fit to bind. We notice also that MR. HARDY'S first novel, "Desperate Remedies," is showing itself more boldly on the stalls. Though frowned upon by its author in an honest little preface, it is full of good things, of minute and curious glimpses into the heart of woman, such as one man only could give us; and, in our poor opinion, is well worthy of a place beside the works that follow it.

MR. WALTER BESANT, says the *Birmingham Post*, is full of his project of founding an authors' club in London for both sexes, and is even searching the Strand for fit premises. Of the similar club in New York there is an untrue story that a loud-voiced man once walked into the library and said "Plagiary;" and that the members present, with the exception of one blind man, went out and resigned in a body.

IF housekeepers are in earnest in wishing to benefit the unemployed in East London, they should buy BRYANT & MAY'S Matches, and refuse the foreign matches which are depriving the workers in East London of a large amount in weekly wages.

THE series of "Thrums Gossips," of which so many readers of THE SPEAKER have expressed their appreciation during the past few months, has come to a close so far as this journal is concerned. But we are glad to say that when they are published by-and-by in book form, they will be accompanied by a large number of additional chapters, dealing with further episodes in the life of that inimitable humourist, Tammas Haggart. In the meantime, MR. BARRIE, who is residing at present in the little Forfarshire town which he has made known to fame, is engaged on a novel of the conventional length, which is to appear shortly in *Good Words*.

"FIVE Years with the Congo Cannibals," the publication of which, by special arrangement with MR. H. M. STANLEY, is delayed until October 15th, is the first attempt at describing the domestic and daily life of the savages of the far interior of Western Equatorial Africa. This work is the pen-and-pencil result of five years spent in their midst by MR. HERBERT WARD, one of the survivors of STANLEY'S ill-fated rear-guard, to whom MR. STANLEY wrote, after reading the proof-sheets of the work: "Such a book as yours would be interesting at any time." It will convey the fullest information yet published in regard to the famous Arab buccaneer TIPPO TIB and his surroundings. MR. WARD'S experience in Africa commenced in 1884, when he received an appointment in the service of the Congo Government, and subsequently, in 1887, he volunteered and became a member of MR. STANLEY'S EMIN PACHA Relief Expedition. The numerous illustrations, which are exceptionally fine, are reproduced from MR. WARD'S own drawings and photographs.

A *fac-simile* of a post-card in MR. GLADSTONE'S handwriting is prefixed to the latest volume of MR. ARROWSMITH'S Library. The work which it recommends to the public is called "Behind the Kafes." It is a sensational story of very considerable merit, in which we are allowed to take a peep into one of the harems of Stamboul. The story is well worth reading for its own sake; but it is also worthy of being studied for the reason which has induced MR. GLADSTONE to give it the sanction of his name—the light it throws upon the condition of the unfortunate female slaves of Constantinople.

A TABLET has just been placed on the house in Warwick Crescent which was for many years the London home of MR. BROWNING. Few minor reforms in metropolitan life have been more useful than that which has been accomplished by the society which has undertaken to indicate in this fashion the London houses which possess special interest of a literary or historical kind. There is still much work to be done by this society, however. The houses of an immense number of men and women of genius who have passed away are as yet undistinguished. When we at last complete the identification of all those houses, and have duly indicated them to the passer-by, we shall have done much to add to the interest of a walk in London.

ENGLISH character is a great puzzle to French novelists. In "Un Cœur de Femme" M. PAUL BOURGET takes no little pains with a certain Lord Herbert Bohun, who is supposed to represent the humour of his race. He does this by coining phrases about his fondness for the bottle. For example, when his friends inquire after his health, he replies that he enjoys an excellent thirst. There is a whole page of this desperate fun. M. ALPHONSE DAUDET is a little more amusing with his sketch of the English officer in a cocked-hat who orders Tartarin